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ABSTRACT

Noting the importance of good nutrition to out-of-school time programs serving children, this strategy brief provides an overview of the major sources of federal food and nutrition funds that can support out-of-school time and community school programs. The brief then highlights five strategies that community leaders and program developers can employ to maximize the use of federal food and nutrition funds in their communities. The strategy section describes the relevant funding sources for each strategy, including specific requirements for the use of program funds, and highlights examples of each strategy in practice. This section also discusses considerations for the use of each strategy. The five strategies address snacks, meals, summer nutrition, technical assistance and outreach, and combining applications. (Contains 19 resources). (EV)

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Maximizing Federal Food and Nutrition Funds for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives

Strategy Brief

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TOOLS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME AND COMMUNITY SCHOOL INITIATIVES

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Maximizing Federal Food and Nutrition Funds for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives

Strategy Brief

by Barbara Hanson Langford

Good nutrition is an important component of out-of-school time and community school programs serving children and youth. Numerous studies over the past twenty years have documented that nutrition stimulates children's learning, improves school attendance and behavior, and contributes to their overall cognitive development.[1] In addition to the direct developmental impacts that nutrition can have on children and youth, meals and snacks can serve as important incentives for young people to attend out-of-school time and community school programs that provide additional opportunities for academic support and enrichment.

Federal food and nutrition programs are important sources of funding for out-of-school time and community school programs. First, these food programs can provide stable and reliable funding. Federal food and nutrition programs are entitlement programs—all eligible children are "entitled" to nutrition benefits. Therefore, programs do not have to compete with each other to receive funds and the amount of funds available is not capped. Moreover, when program developers are able to use federal food and nutrition funds to cover the cost of meals and snacks, they free up program dollars that can be used for other purposes. Finally, recent changes in federal nutrition law that expand the eligibility age of children and make it easier for programs to access federal food funds have created new opportunities for out-of-school time and community school programs to utilize these important funding sources.

This strategy brief first provides an overview of the major sources of federal food and nutrition funds that can support out-of-school time and community school programs. It then highlights five strategies that community leaders and program developers can employ to maximize the use of federal food and nutrition funds in their communities.

Overview of Federal Food and Nutrition Programs That Can Fund Out-of-School Time and Community School Programs

Out-of-school time and community school programs can utilize one or more of four federal food and nutrition programs. Together, these programs offer a variety of options for providing snacks and meals to school-age children and youth. The Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture oversees all of the following programs. In most states, state education agencies administer the programs.

- **National School Lunch Program (NSLP).** The NSLP provides reimbursement for nutritious low-cost or free lunches to 27 million children each school

[1] *See Devaney, B. and Stuart, E.,* Eating Breakfast: Effects of the School Breakfast Program, *Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (August 1998); Levitsky, D.A. and Strupp, B., "Malnutrition and the Brain: Changing Concepts, Changing Concerns."* Journal of Nutrition, *125: 2212S-2220S (1995); Meyers, A.F., Sampson, A.E., Weitzman, M., Rogers, B.L., and Kayne, H., "School Breakfast Program and School Performance."* American Journal of Diseases and Children *143, p. 1234 (October 1989); Pelican, S., O'Connell, L.H., Lewis, C., and Byrd-Bredbenner, C., "Relationships of Hunger and Malnutrition to Learning Ability and Behavior." University Park: PA: Nutrition Education Center of the Pennsylvania State University and the Florida Department of Citrus (1985); and United States Department of Agriculture,* The National Evaluation of School Nutrition Programs *(1983).*

day in more than 96,000 public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. Recent changes in federal law now allow schools to claim reimbursements under the NSLP for snacks served in after-school programs. In fiscal year 1999, $5.26 billion was reimbursed through the NSLP.

- **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).** The CACFP provides reimbursement for meals and snacks served in child and adult day care facilities, including before- and after-school programs. In 1998, CACFP provided reimbursements for meals served to 2.5 million children. In fiscal year 1999, $1.6 billion was reimbursed through the CACFP.

- **School Breakfast Program (SBP).** The SBP provides reimbursement for breakfasts served in schools and residential child care institutions. During fiscal year 1998, an average of 7.2 million children participated in the SBP each day; of those, 6.1 million received meals free or at a reduced price. In fiscal year 1999, $1.34 billion was reimbursed through the SBP.

- **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).** The SFSP provides reimbursement for free meals to low-income children during summer vacation. Programs can receive reimbursement for meals served to eligible children and youth as well as for administrative costs. During the summer of 1998, 2.4 million children participated in the SFSP program each day at more than 28,000 sites across the country. In fiscal year 1999, $294.4 million was reimbursed through the SFSP.

Recent changes made as a result of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 1998 have created new opportunities for out-of-school time and community school programs to utilize NSLP and CACFP funds. As mentioned above, under the new law, school-based programs are now eligible for reimbursement for snacks under the NSLP, in addition to the CACFP. The new law also expanded both programs' eligibility from age 12 to age 18. Moreover, program directors in low-income areas also can take advantage of the new option of "area eligibility," which enables programs to receive the highest rate of reimbursement without qualifying each child individually.

In choosing among the various sources of federal food and nutrition funds, program developers should consider several factors, including the age and family income of the children and youth they are serving, program operating schedules, the type of food service they want to offer, and program sponsorship requirements. The chart on page 4 provides a guide for program developers to use in determining which federal food and nutrition funding sources are most appropriate for their needs. Specific requirements and considerations for the use of each program are discussed in greater detail below.

Strategies for Maximizing Federal Food and Nutrition Funds

This section discusses five strategies to access federal food and nutrition funds for out-of-school time and community school initiatives. The first three strategies are most applicable for program directors who are providing direct services to school-age children and their families. The last two strategies are more relevant for community leaders and policy makers seeking to improve larger systems of out-of-school time care. This section describes the relevant funding sources for each strategy, including specific requirements for the use of program funds, and highlights examples of each strategy in practice. It also discusses considerations for the use of each strategy.

1. SNACKS: Accessing Federal Funds for Snacks Served in Out-of-School Time Programs During the School Year

Virtually every after-school program serving low-income children can receive federal reimbursements for the cost of snacks. After-school programs can be reimbursed for snacks through one of two programs, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). To be eligible for reimbursement under either program, after-school programs must meet the following criteria:

1. The purpose of the program must be to provide care in after-school settings. Programs must provide children and youth with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment.[2]

Which Federal Food and Nutrition Program is Right for My Initiative?

	National School Lunch Program	Child and Adult Care Food Program		School Breakfast Program	Summer Food Service Program
Type of Food Service You Can Provide	Snacks	Snacks	Meals	Breakfast	Snacks and Meals
Age of Children Who You Can Serve	0—18	0—18	0—12	5—18	0—18
When You Can Offer Food Service	After school on days in which school is in session	School days, weekends, and holidays during the school year	School days, weekends, and holidays	Before school	Summer
Eligible Programs	Public schools, and school-administered programs	Community-based providers, family child care homes, other private nonprofit organizations, and public schools	Community-based providers, family child care homes, other private nonprofit organizations, and public schools	Public schools	School food authorities, local government agencies, private nonprofit organizations, and residential camps
How You Qualify for Reimbursement	■ Programs must be located in a low-income area; or ■ Programs can qualify low-income children individually	For children 0—12: ■ Programs must be located in a low-income area; or ■ Programs can qualify low-income children individually For children 12—18: programs must be located in a low-income area	Programs qualify low-income children individually	Programs qualify children under the NSLP	■ Programs must located in a low-income area; or ■ Programs must serve low-income children

2. Programs must include educational or enrichment activities. Extracurricular activities—such as the school choir, debate team, and drama society—can qualify only if their basic purpose is to provide after-school care as defined above. Organized athletic programs engaged in interscholastic sports are not eligible for reimbursement for snacks. However, programs that include supervised athletic activity as or along with enrichment activities may participate as long as they are open to all and do not limit membership for reasons other than space or security considerations.

If a state or locality requires after-school care programs to be licensed, then programs must meet these requirements to participate in either the NSLP or CACFP. In the absence of state and local licensing requirements, programs must meet state and local health and safety standards.

The NSLP and the CACFP both offer important sources of revenue for after-school programs. The two programs differ in specific requirements and offer different advantages and considerations.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Any school that is eligible to operate the NSLP may be reimbursed for snacks served in after-school programs.[3] To qualify for reimbursement under the NSLP, the after-school program **must be sponsored by the school.** Although the school can contract with other organizations to provide after-school care services, and programs can be run in non-school facilities, the school must retain final administrative and management responsibility for the program. Moreover, the school food authority must assume full responsibility for meeting food program requirements.

Under the NSLP, schools may claim reimbursement for one snack per child per day. Children and youth are eligible to participate through age 18.[4] Schools can also claim reimbursements for individuals, regardless of age, who are mentally or physically disabled. **Snacks can only be reimbursed if they are served after the school day has ended.** Under the NSLP, programs cannot be reimbursed for snacks served before or during the school day, on weekends, holidays or vacation periods.[5]

Student eligibility for reimbursements is determined in one of two ways:

1. Area eligibility: programs can qualify as "area eligible" if the school serving the area has 50 percent or more of the children certified to receive free or reduced-price meals—that is, 50 percent of the children have family incomes below 185 percent of the poverty level.[6] Programs that are "area eligible" receive reimbursement at the free rate for snacks served to all children, regardless of each individual child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.
2. Individual eligibility: programs that are not "area eligible" are reimbursed for snacks depending on each individual's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. Programs also receive a small subsidy for snacks served to children who are not eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

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[3] *To be "regularly scheduled," the program does not have to operate on a daily basis.*

[4] *If a student's nineteenth birthday occurs during the school year, reimbursements may be claimed for snacks served to that student during the remainder of the school year.*

[5] *Schools that operate a summer school that is an integral part of the curriculum can receive reimbursement for snacks served during summer after-school programs.*

[6] *Area eligibility can be determined using data from any school—elementary, middle or high school. For example, if a high school with less than 50 percent free or reduced-price meal enrollment is located in the attendance area of a middle school that has 50 percent or more free or reduced-price meal enrollment, then the high school's after-school program would be area eligible.*

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Federal Reimbursement Rates for Snacks for FY2000

Level of Reimbursement	Qualifying Family Income	Reimbursement Amount Per Snack*
Free	At or below 130 percent of the poverty level	54 cents
Reduced-price	Between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level	27 cents
Paid	Above 185 percent of the poverty level	5 cents

Programs must follow federal meal pattern requirements. Moreover, snacks must contain at least two of the following four components:

- A serving of milk;
- A serving of meat or meat alternative;
- A serving of vegetables or fruit or full-strength vegetable or fruit juice; and
- A serving of whole grain or enriched bread or cereal.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Program developers can also utilize the CACFP for reimbursement for snacks served in after-school programs. In addition to the requirements described above—that programs must provide educational or enrichment activities in an organized and supervised environment—to be eligible for reimbursement under CACFP, **programs must be operated by a public or private nonprofit organization**, such as child care centers, schools, and family child care homes.† **Both school-run and community-based programs are eligible for reimbursement.**

Eligibility requirements differ for younger and older students. For programs serving children age 12 and under, eligibility is determined in the same way as under the NSLP:

1. Area eligibility: programs can qualify as "area eligible" if the school serving the area has 50 percent or more of the children certified to receive free or reduced-price meals—that is, 50 percent of the children have family incomes below 185 percent of the poverty level. Programs that are "area eligible" receive reimbursement at the free rate for snacks served to all children, regardless of each individual child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

* *Reimbursement rates for Alaska and Hawaii are slightly higher.*

† *Family child care homes must sign an agreement with a sponsoring organization to participate in CACFP. The sponsoring organization organizes training, conducts monitoring, and assists with planning menus and completing reimbursement forms. For-profit child care centers can participate in the CACFP, provided that at least 25% of the children in the program's enrollment receive Title XX (Social Services Block Grant) subsidies.*

USING THE NSLP: GETTING STARTED

1. Contact your state education agency for more information about what is going on in your state. For a list of state contacts, go to www.fns.usda.gov/cnd or www.frac.org. See if your school food authority is already serving snacks for other after-school programs in the area.
2. Find a supporter in the school—a school administrator, teacher, and/or school food service director. Ask them if the school would be willing to serve as the sponsor of the program and run the food component.
3. Find out what records you need to keep. Your school food service staff should be able to provide you with information on program reporting requirements. You will need to maintain a roster or sign-in sheet for participating children. Additionally, if you are area eligible, you must record and report the total number of snacks you serve each day. If you are not area eligible, you must record and report the number of snacks served each day by category of reimbursement—free, reduced-price, or paid. You will also need to document that you comply with the required meal pattern.

2. Individual eligibility: programs that are not "area eligible" are reimbursed for snacks depending on each individual's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. Programs also receive a small subsidy for snacks served to children who are not eligible for free or reduced-price meals.[10]

For programs serving children age 13 to 18, only those that are "area eligible" can receive reimbursements. There is no provision under the CACFP for individual income testing for children age 13 and over.

As under the NSLP, after-school programs may claim reimbursement under CACFP for one snack per child per day. Programs serving children under the age of 12 are reimbursed at the same rates under the NSLP listed above for free, reduced-price, or paid snacks.[11] Programs serving children age 13 to 18, all of which must be area eligible, are reimbursed at the free rate for all children served. Unlike the NSLP, programs can be reimbursed for snacks served not only for days in which school is in session, but also on weekends, holidays, and vacation periods during the regular school year.[12] Programs must also follow federal meal pattern and nutrition requirements.

[9] *The U.S. Department of Agriculture refers to programs that are "area eligible" for snack reimbursement under CACFP as Afterschool At-Risk Centers.*

[10] *The U.S. Department of Agriculture refers to programs that are not "area eligible," but that can receive reimbursement for snacks based on individual children's free and reduced-price meal status as Outside-School-Hours Care Centers (OSHCCs). OSHCCs can also receive reimbursements for meals served to eligible children (see discussion of meals below).*

[11] *Programs run by family day care homes are reimbursed under a separate system that was instituted under the welfare reform act of 1996. Tier I homes are reimbursed at a rate of $0.50 per snack; tier II homes are reimbursed at a rate of $0.13 per snack.*

[12] *In areas where schools operate on a year-round basis, programs may receive reimbursements for snacks through CACFP all year.*

USING THE CACFP: GETTING STARTED

1. Contact your CACFP state agency for application information. For a list of state contacts, go to www.fns.usda.gov/cnd or www.frac.org.
2. Find out if the state agency or a nonprofit organization provides technical assistance in accessing CACFP funds. For a list of state anti-hunger organizations, go to www.frac.org.
3. Determine if your program is area eligible—if it is located in the attendance area of a school where at least 50 percent of children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Data should be available from your CACFP state agency or contact your school district.
4. If your program is not area eligible, you will need to individually qualify the children you serve. Remember, under CACFP, if you are not area eligible, you can only be reimbursed for snacks served to children age 12 and under. Your CACFP state agency can assist you in qualifying students.
5. Find out what records you have to keep. Your CACFP state agency can provide you with information on program reporting requirements. You will need to maintain a roster or sign-in sheet for participating children. Additionally, if you are area eligible, you must record and report the total number of snacks you serve each day. If you are not area eligible, you must record and report the number of snacks served each day by category of reimbursement—free, reduced-price, or paid. You will also need to document that you comply with the required meal pattern.

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STEVENSON-YMCA COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROJECT

The goal of the Stevenson-YMCA Community School Project in Long Beach, California is to enhance the academic, social, and career development of youth through the active partnership of youth, parents, and school and community resources. The Community School seeks to extend the traditional school day with integrated before- and after-school and weekend activities. These activities include a parent center, sports, fine arts, and leisure activities, family education, social activities, academic support, and career development for youth and parents. The project is housed at the Stevenson Elementary School, and the YMCA of Greater Long Beach serves as the lead agency. Collaborating partners include California State University-Long Beach Department of Social Work, the Children's Clinic, the City of Long Beach Neighborhood Services Bureau, and the Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department.

The Stevenson-YMCA Community School Project serves 607 families before and after school and on weekends. Children were coming to the after-school program hungry, but program directors struggled to find resources to pay for snacks. In partnership with the school food service authority, the Project is able to provide a snack to all participating children through the NSLP. The snack is served before homework hour and staff have found that children are energized and more attentive through the rest of the program. The project currently receives $10,000 in reimbursements for after-school snacks served to 100 children each day through the NSLP. In addition, the school also provides breakfast through the SBP for all children. The project is part of a national Extended-Service Schools initiative funded by the Wallace -Reader's Digest Funds. For more information, contact Ralph Hurtado at 562-624-2376.

Considerations for Using Federal Funds to Pay for Snacks:

- In terms of administrative requirements, partnering with schools to utilize the NSLP will likely be the best option for accessing snack reimbursements. Eligible schools already have free and reduced-price meal certification information on their students, alleviating the requirement to collect income information. Schools can receive reimbursement for snacks through the NSLP simply by adding an addendum to their existing contract with the state nutrition office. If school officials are not willing to partner with community-based programs and/or to operate the food programs, or if school officials and community-based providers differ regarding program goals and activities, program developers can utilize the CACFP for snack reimbursement. However, the administrative burden of qualifying students will likely be greater.
- Programs that are not "area eligible" and that serve children 13 and older can only qualify for reimbursement under the NSLP.
- NSLP only provides reimbursement for snacks served in after-school programs on days that school is in session. For reimbursement for snacks served on weekends, holidays, and vacations, programs must use the CACFP.
- Programs serving older youth may find that a snack as defined under the NSLP and CACFP (e.g., an apple and glass of milk) may not meet the full nutritional needs of their program participants. Program directors may want to seek additional funding from state, local, or private sources to cover the costs of providing a larger snack to older youth.

2. MEALS: Accessing Federal Funds for Meals Served in Out-of-School Time Programs during the School Year

In addition to utilizing federal funds for reimbursement for snacks served in out-of-school time and community school programs, program directors can also receive reimbursements for certain meals served during the school year. Out-of-school time and community school programs can receive reimbursement for meals under two federal programs, the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the School Breakfast Program.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). In addition to providing reimbursements for snacks, the CACFP also provides reimbursements for meals served to eligible children and youth.[13] **Public and private nonprofit organizations, including schools, community-based organizations, and family child care homes,[14] are eligible for reimbursement.[15]**

Children age 12 and under are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals under the CACFP. Under the meal component of the CACFP, all children are qualified individually—there is no provision for qualifying children by area for meals. Programs are reimbursed based on each individual's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.[16] Programs also receive a small subsidy for meals served to children receiving full-price meals.

Programs can be reimbursed for meals served on days in which school is in session, as well as on weekends, holidays, and vacation periods during the regular school year.[17] Programs can be reimbursed for up to two meals and one snack per child per day or, alternately, for one meal and two snacks per child per day.[18] Programs must follow federal meal pattern and nutrition requirements.

The School Breakfast Program (SBP). SBP provides reimbursement to public schools and nonprofit private elementary, middle, and high schools for breakfasts served to low-income children. As with the NSLP, children are eligible for free or reduced-price breakfasts based on their families' income. The school uses the NSLP application to qualify children for the SBP. Some schools serve breakfast as part of the school day; others serve breakfast before school starts. Community school program developers seeking to offer enrichment activities before school may want to consider structuring the program around the SBP.

While by no means a requirement of the SBP, this partnership can offer several advantages—pairing a healthy breakfast with before-school activities can increase the number of children participating in the

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[13] The U.S. Department of Agriculture refers to programs that are eligible to receive reimbursement for meals as Outside-School-Hours Care Centers (OSHCC's). OSHCC's can also receive reimbursements for snacks served to eligible children (see discussion of snacks above).

[14] Family child care homes must sign an agreement with a sponsoring organization to participate in CACFP. The sponsoring organization organizes training, conducts monitoring, and assists with planning menus and completing reimbursement forms. For-profit child care centers can participate in the CACFP, provided that at least 25% of the children in the program's enrollment receive Title XX (Social Services Block Grant) subsidies.

[15] As discussed earlier, there is no federal requirement for programs operating under the CACFP to have either federal, state or local licensing or approval as a condition of eligibility. However, if a state or locality does require licensing, programs must be licensed to participate in the program. In the absence of state and local licensing requirements, programs must meet state or local health and safety standards.

[16] Under the welfare law passed in 1996, family child care homes are reimbursed under a different two-tiered system. Providers that are located in low-income areas or who serve children from low-income families are reimbursed at the tier I rate. Other providers are reimbursed at the lower tier II rate.

[17] For meals served to children during the summer, the Summer Food Service Program is another option for programs. Program directors should check with their state CACFP agency contact in determining if they should switch from the CACFP to the Summer Food Service Program for reimbursement. (The Summer Food Service Program is discussed in more detail below.)

Reimbursement Rates for Meals Under the CACFP for FY2000[19]

Level of Reimbursement	Qualifying Family Income	Reimbursement Amount for Breakfast[20]	Reimbursement Amount for Lunch or Supper[21]
Free	At or below 130 percent of the poverty level	$1.09	$1.98
Reduced-price	Between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level	$0.79	$1.58
Paid	Above 185 percent of the poverty level	$0.21	$0.19

SBP as well as provide additional enrichment opportunities for children and youth.

Schools are reimbursed for each breakfast served to eligible children and youth. Schools also receive a small subsidy for breakfasts served to children who receive full-price meals. Schools may qualify for higher "severe-need" reimbursements if a specified percentage of their meals are served free or at reduced prices. Breakfasts must meet federal nutrition standards and must provide children with at least one-fourth of their daily recommended allowance of key nutrients.

Despite numerous studies documenting the importance of breakfast in children's academic performance, the SBP is still an underutilized resource for feeding school-age children. Breakfast is available in far fewer schools than is lunch. In fiscal year 1997, 94,000 schools offered school lunch, while only 69,000 offered breakfast. Only 40 percent of the children who ate a free or reduced-price school lunch also ate a free or reduced-price breakfast.

Because low-income children comprise the vast majority of those who eat breakfast at school, several researchers cite the stigma attached to the program as a major reason for low participation rates. Many schools have dealt with this issue by offering breakfast free to all students, an option allowed under regulations referred to as Provisions 2 and 3.[22] Schools can generally offset the additional costs of providing universal breakfast by the increased participation of eligible children and by spreading administrative costs. Congress recently passed legislation authorizing a pilot program to study the effects of providing universal school breakfast on children's participation, nutrition, test scores and classroom behavior. Findings from this pilot project should provide additional insight into ways to encourage greater participation in the SBP.

Considerations for Using Federal Funds to Pay for Meals

- Encouraging the use and/or expansion of school breakfast funds may require an education and outreach campaign to make sure that school personnel, parents, and children are aware of the benefits of breakfast and its relationship to academic performance during the school day.

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[18] *Three hours must elapse between the beginning of one meal service and the beginning of another. Moreover, an evening meal must begin no later than 7 p.m. and end no later than 8 p.m.*

[19] *Programs run by family day care homes are reimbursed under a separate system that was instituted under the welfare reform act of 1996. Tier I homes are reimbursed at a rate of $0.92 for breakfast and $1.69 for lunch or supper; tier II homes are reimbursed at a rate of $0.34 per breakfast and $1.02 for lunch or supper.*

[20] *Reimbursement rates for Alaska and Hawaii are slightly higher.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Under Provisions 2 and 3, schools with a significant portion of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals can provide meals free to all students and are only required to collect free and reduced-price meal applications once every four years instead of every year. At four-year intervals, the school must demonstrate that its attendance area has not undergone significant economic changes that have affected family incomes and changed the percentage of low-income children.*

[23] *Reimbursement rates for Alaska and Hawaii are slightly higher.*

Reimbursement Rates for the School Breakfast Program for FY2000

Level of Reimbursement	Qualifying Family Income	Reimbursement Amount[23] Non-Severe Need	Severe Need
Free	At or below 130 percent of the poverty level	$1.09	$1.30
Reduced-price	Between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level	$0.79	$1.00
Paid	Above 185 percent of the poverty level	$0.21	$0.21

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- Offering an enrichment activity in addition to the meal, particularly for breakfast, may encourage greater utilization of both the activity and the meal service.
- For school-sponsored programs wanting to provide breakfast to students, the SBP is likely the easiest option in terms of administrative requirements. Moreover, programs qualifying as "severe need" receive higher reimbursement rates for breakfast under the SBP than they otherwise would under CACFP.
- Program directors should examine ways to combine food programs in order to maximize federal reimbursements. For example, a school-sponsored program could provide after-school snacks using the NSLP, and supper under the CACFP.
- For community-based providers using CACFP, serving meals requires significant planning and preparation. Make sure to have the necessary infrastructure in place—e.g., equipment, purchasing agreements—or consider contracting with a vendor to provide meals for the children and youth in your program.

3. SUMMER NUTRITION: Accessing Federal Reimbursements for Meals and Snacks Served in Summer Programs

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was created to ensure that children and youth in low-income areas would have access to nutritious meals during summer vacation. Under SFSP, summer programs can receive reimbursement for meals and snacks and for certain administrative costs.

State education agencies administer SFSP in most states. **Schools, public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, public or private nonprofit camps, and public or private universities and colleges can apply to sponsor the program.** Sponsors sign agreements with their state agency to run the program and receive training from the state agency to learn how to plan, operate, and monitor a food service program.

Meal service sites can be located in a variety of settings, including **schools, recreation centers, playgrounds, parks, churches, community centers, day camps, summer camps, and housing projects.** Food service programs are designated as either open or enrolled sites.

- **Open sites** operate in low-income areas where at least half of the children are eligible for free and reduced-price meals (households with income at or below 185 percent of the poverty level). Meals are provided free to all children who attend an open site. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently created a new category of a restricted open site. Food service programs with this designation were initially open to broad community participation, but now limit attendance due to reasons of security, safety, or control. Eligibility for a restricted open site is determined in the same way as an open site.

THE PITTSTON AREA CAPABLE READERS PROGRAM

The PAC (Pittston Area Capable) Readers program, in Pittston, Pennsylvania, links a reading program with a nutritious breakfast. In 1983, the school district was beginning a school breakfast program at the same time that school officials expressed interest in starting a read-aloud program. The two programs seemed like a wonderful match, and the PAC Readers program was created. Under the program, older students volunteer to read aloud to younger students during the breakfast period. The position of a PAC reader volunteer has come to be associated with a certain degree of prestige in the school—ninety-eight percent of Pittston's fifth graders volunteer to read to 350 students in the first, second, and third grades. The read-aloud program is offered twice a week throughout the school year. PAC readers must complete a volunteer form and undergo training to participate. Gifted students, as well as students needing learning support, participate in the program and choose books to read based on their skill level. The reading program encourages participation in the SBP and also enhances the reading skills of the PAC reader volunteers. The program has also served to increase the awareness of the importance of reading among both parents and community members. For more information, contact Catherine Lapsansky, Pittston Area School District Primary Center, at 570-655-3785.

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- **Enrolled sites** provide meals only to children who are enrolled in an activity program, such as a day camp, at the site. In order for an enrolled site to participate in SFSP, at least half of the children enrolled must be eligible for free and reduced-price school meals (households with incomes at or below 185 percent of the poverty level).

Programs can receive reimbursements for all children 18 and under who participate and for people over 18 who are mentally or physically disabled. At most sites, children can receive two meals per day (breakfast and lunch, lunch and a snack, or breakfast and supper). Residential camp programs and those that primarily serve migrant children may be eligible to serve up to three meals each day. However, residential camp sites can only be reimbursed for meals served to children who qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Summer programs can be reimbursed for operating costs—the direct costs of providing meals—as well as for administrative costs. The SFSP is the only federal program that provides separate reimbursement for administrative costs. Operating costs include the actual cost of food; processing, transporting, storing, and handling food; salaries of food preparation workers; utensils and plates; kitchen equipment; and site clean-up. Administrative costs are those related to planning, organizing, and administering the program, including salaries of staff and rental costs of facilities. Reimbursement rates under the SFSP decreased under the 1996 welfare law. Consequently, programs need to budget for and manage operating and administrative costs very carefully to ensure that reimbursements cover actual meal program costs. Program facilities must meet local and state health and safety standards. Meals and snacks must meet federal nutritional guidelines.

USING THE SFSP: GETTING STARTED

1. Become or find a sponsor. Talk with the SFSP coordinator in your state. For a list of state contacts, go to www.fns.usda.gov/cnd or www.frac.org. Attend your state agency's training for those who are interested in serving as a SFSP sponsor.
2. Determine your site's eligibility. Call your state SFSP coordinator to see if they have information on whether your site would be eligible as an open site. If the state coordinator does not have the school data you need, contact your local elementary schools and ask them for a letter that includes their total enrollment, the number of children eligible for free and reduced-price meals, and the boundaries of the school's attendance area (so you can show that your site is within the area served by the school). If you are not eligible as an open site, you can still receive reimbursement as an enrolled site. However, you will need to collect applications from individual children and youth to document their household income.
3. Develop a system to document operating and administrative costs. You will only be reimbursed for actual costs that you incur up to the maximum rate.

[24] *Higher reimbursement rates for administrative costs apply to rural sites or sites that prepare meals and snacks themselves. Reimbursement rates for Alaska and Hawaii are slightly higher.*

Reimbursement Rates for SFSP for Summer 2000

Type of Meal Served	Reimbursement for Operating Costs (per meal)	Reimbursement for Administrative Costs (per meal)[24]
Breakfast	$1.25	$0.0975 to $0.1250
Lunch or Supper	$2.18	$0.1900 to $0.2275
Snack or Supplement	$0.50	$0.0500 to $0.0625

VINITA PUBLIC SCHOOLS: FOOD, SUN, AND FUN

The Vinita Public Schools created the Food, Sun, and Fun program in 1998 to ensure that children in this small Oklahoma town have access to both nutritious meals and enrichment activities during the summer months. Vinita Public Schools partnered with the Craig County 4-H program and the Craig County Department of Human Services to organize the nine-week program. Each week's activities focus on a specific theme—personal safety and first aid, career development, self-esteem, wildlife and nature, cultural diversity, and physical education—and children learn through fun, hands-on activities, including computer classes and Spanish lessons. Enrollment for the program is as high as 200 children per day. Food, Sun, and Fun provides children with a nutritious lunch, funded by the SFSP. While the school district contributes a small amount of funding, program activities are primarily funded through private contributions and are staffed with volunteers from the community. For more information, contact Alberta Burgess, Child Nutrition Director, at 918-256-6950.

Considerations:

- Most sponsors choose to operate open sites. If you do not qualify as an open site, you can still receive reimbursements as an enrolled site. However, the administrative burden is greater, since you have to collect applications from children who are participating. If you operate an enrolled site and your enrollment increases, you must ensure that at least half of the children participating are still eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- Smaller programs may want to have another organization serve as your sponsor and run the food component of your program. Food banks, your school district, and larger youth-serving organizations in your area may be willing to partner with your program—you would provide activities and determine the curriculum; your partner would take care of the food service requirements.
- Scaling-up does offer advantages. Programs of sufficient size can use administrative reimbursement funds to improve coordination, streamline application procedures, and conduct outreach.

SEATTLE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

The City of Seattle's Summer Food Service Program provides critical planning and coordination functions for the largest summer feeding program in the state. Last year, the Summer Food Service Program operated in 158 sites and served approximately 7,000 to 8,000 children age one to eighteen each day. The city partners with several public and private organizations, including the Seattle Public School District (which serves as the vendor for all meals and snacks), the Parks and Recreation Department (which provides recreation leaders at certain sites), and area food banks. Summer feeding sites are housed at a variety of locations in and around the city, including summer school programs, public housing developments, community centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and playgrounds. The Summer Food Service Program director identifies feeding sites and assists sites in completing the SFSP application process. The director also has access to free and reduced-price meal data from the school district to help sites determine if they can operate an open or enrolled site. Due to the vast size of the program, the city is able to draw down almost $1 million in operating and administrative reimbursements through the SFSP. Administrative reimbursements are able to cover the salary of a full-time director. The city program is also staffed by nine monitors from area universities who supervise sites, verify enrollment data, and provide assistance in meeting program requirements. Twenty-five percent of the monitors' salaries are paid for by the administrative reimbursements under SFSP; the remaining 75 percent is covered by work-study financial aid. For more information, contact Randi Solinsky, Coordinator, Summer Food Service Program, at 206-386-1360.

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4. INTERMEDIARIES: Providing Technical Assistance and Outreach to Improve Access to Federal Food and Nutrition Funds

Another strategy to maximize the use of federal food and nutrition funds is to provide technical assistance and outreach to help out-of-school time and community school programs access these dollars. Many local and statewide organizations—including professional development organizations, anti-hunger groups, child care resource and referral agencies, and child advocacy organizations—serve as intermediaries to provide important connections between program developers and state food and nutrition agency officials.

Technical assistance and outreach efforts can take a variety of forms. Intermediary organizations often conduct outreach efforts to provide information to programs about the availability of food and nutrition funds. Some intermediaries also conduct media campaigns aimed at educating not only providers, but also school officials, parents, and children, about the importance of good nutrition and ways to utilize nutrition programs.

Intermediaries also can provide assistance to programs in navigating the state nutrition system—helping to determine a site's eligibility and assisting program developers in completing the necessary paperwork. Some organizations directly intervene on a program's behalf when a program developer faces a particular eligibility barrier.

Some intermediaries are also active advocates, working at the state and local government levels to streamline application processes, ease administrative requirements and better coordinate federal and state nutrition dollars. Some intermediaries have successfully advocated for additional state nutrition dollars to supplement federal sources and/or to provide start-up funds for new programs.

Funding for intermediary organizations that provide technical assistance and outreach typically comes from private sources, most notably, local community foundations and corporations. Some organizations may also receive funding from a state contract to conduct outreach efforts, most commonly for the Summer Food Service Program.

THE CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

The Children's Alliance is a statewide advocacy organization located in the state of Washington that is dedicated to improving the safety, security, health, and education of the state's children. In partnership with School's Out Consortium, a statewide school-age advocacy and professional development organization, The Children's Alliance provides technical assistance to out-of-school time programs on accessing federal food and nutrition funds and conducts outreach and advocacy efforts around child nutrition issues. The Children's Alliance works directly with programs to increase awareness of the importance of nutrition in after-school programs and to assist programs in becoming eligible for food and nutrition funds. In addition to providing assistance in accessing nutrition funds, The Children's Alliance also informs program developers of other funding sources to support their programs, including funding opportunities from local foundations. In an effort to encourage the use of the Summer Food Service Program, The Children's Alliance launched a Summer Food Hotline to help families find the closest feeding site to their home. Six thousand families accessed the hotline last year.

Media strategies are an important component of The Children's Alliance work, and staff have found targeting local community newspapers to be an effective strategy for increasing the use of nutrition funds. The Children's Alliance is also an effective advocate at the state level, successfully lobbying for new state funds to increase the reimbursement level for summer food programs and to create Meals for Kids grants that can be used to expand current summer feeding programs or for start-up costs, such as purchasing equipment. For more information, contact Laura Strickler, Outreach Coordinator, at 206-324-0340

Considerations:

- Based on anecdotal evidence, partnerships between organizations that have direct access to providers—such as resource and referral agencies and provider training organizations—and those that have nutrition expertise—such as anti-hunger and child nutrition advocacy organizations—seem to have the greatest success in providing technical assistance on accessing federal food and nutrition funds.
- Local organizations may need to expand their capability, including developing the necessary organizational structure and resources, to provide technical assistance and outreach around child nutrition programs. The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), a national intermediary providing technical assistance and outreach, can serve as a useful resource in increasing the capacity of your own local intermediary to provide these services.

5. COMBINED APPLICATIONS: Linking and/or Coordinating Application Processes for Food and Nutrition Programs and Other Health and Human Services

Program developers and community leaders can develop strategies not only to maximize the use of federal food and nutrition dollars, but also to streamline administrative requirements in order to leverage other health and human service funds. Like federal food and nutrition programs, eligibility for many health and human service programs—such as Child Care and Development Fund subsidies, the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)—is typically determined by family income. In many cases, eligibility requirements for these programs are very similar to free and reduced-price meal eligibility requirements. Program developers and community leaders can work to streamline application procedures for a variety of health and human service programs and free and reduced-price meals by collecting and verifying only one application from each family. In such a system, administrative costs are significantly lessened, families are no longer required to fill out multiple forms that ask for similar information, and children are more likely to receive the range of services they need.

One way to streamline application procedures is through the disclosure of information regarding children's free and reduced-price meal status between food and nutrition programs.[25] Under U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines, agencies that determine free and reduced-price meal status—including state agencies, school food service authorities, schools, child care institutions, and summer food service programs—may, though are not required to, disclose children's eligibility information to administrators of other child nutrition programs.[26] This provision allows program directors to qualify children who are already qualified for one nutrition program (for example, NSLP, CACFP, SBP, or SFSP) for other nutrition programs without having to collect a second application from the child's family. For example, any child who is eligible to receive free meals through the NSLP can be automatically qualified to receive free meals through the CACFP.

Direct certification is another strategy to streamline application procedures. Federal regulations allow children whose families participate in TANF or the Food Stamp Program (FSP) to be directly certified for free meals under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. Direct certification is done through one of two ways:

(1) The state or local TANF or FSP office sends a letter to TANF or FSP families notifying them of their eligibility to receive free meals. The family then takes the letter to the school to establish eligibility under the NSLP.[27]

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[25] *For more information, see the U.S. Department of Agriculture memo issued on December 7, 1998, Limited Disclosure of Children's Free and Reduced Price Meal or Free Milk Eligibility Information (SP 99-3); (CACFP 99-2). The memo is available at http://ns1.usda.gov/cnd/Care/Policy/LimitedDisclosure-SP99-3.htm or from any of your state nutrition agencies.*

[26] *Agencies that determine free and reduced-price meal status do not need parental consent to disclose eligibility information to administrators of other child nutrition programs. However, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends that determining agencies inform families if they plan to disclose or use eligibility information outside of the program for which the family originally applied.*

[27] *The family may also simply list their TANF or FSP case number on the NSLP application in lieu of providing detailed household size and income information.*

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(2) The school food service authority or state NSLP agency identifies children eligible for free meals from information provided by the state or local TANF or FSP office. These children are directly qualified to receive free meals under the NSLP and SBP.[28]

Direct certification can significantly lessen administrative costs associated with accessing federal food and nutrition programs. School food authorities no longer have to collect applications and verify income information that has been collected and verified by other government agencies. Direct certification can also serve to expand participation rates of eligible children whose families are unaware of or reluctant to apply for these programs.

Recently, several states have begun to use the NSLP application as a vehicle for outreach for other health and human service programs. Commonly, states have amended their NSLP application to include a waiver of confidentiality rights that allows school officials to give information regarding families' free and reduced-price meal status to Medicaid and SCHIP officials. State health officials can then contact potential applicants and begin an enrollment process for these families to receive health benefits. In these states, the NSLP application serves as an important entry point for families to receive a broader range of supports and services. The Child Nutrition Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed prototype forms to assist school food authorities and community leaders in modifying the NSLP application for outreach purposes.[29]

A unique strategy is to directly link the NSLP application process with application processes for other health and human service programs with similar eligibility requirements. In Kansas City, Missouri, state agency officials allow children who are eligible for free lunch to be directly qualified for child care subsidies for the city's before- and after-school child care program (see example below) through a single application process. By unifying application processes, programs and state agencies are able to save enormous administrative costs of individually qualifying each child and are able to provide child care subsidies to many families who otherwise would likely not apply.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY, CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS DIVISION

The state of Texas has been a pioneer in using direct certification to qualify students for school nutrition programs. The Texas Education Agency receives Food Stamp Program participation data and conducts a cross-match of this information with student data. Once the agency determines which children are directly certified due to their families' participation in the Food Stamp Program, the agency mails lists of qualified children to respective school food service authorities. Schools have the option of whether or not to use this data; 60 to 70 percent of schools use this information to minimize application and verification costs. Families with children who are directly certified receive a letter from the agency informing them of their child's automatic eligibility for free meals. All other students receive standard applications for free and reduced-price meals. Last year, Texas Child Nutrition Programs Division staff directly certified about 416,000 of the 2 million children eligible for free meals. The agency also provides a model letter to schools that they can use to inform parents of children eligible for free and reduced-price meals of other health and human services for which their child may be eligible. The school can then follow up with these families and assist them in participating in other public and private programs. For more information, contact Jack Bishop, Policy Specialist or John Perkins, Director, Child Nutrition Programs, Texas Education Agency, at 512-997-6550.

[28] *School food service authorities must notify households that they have been directly certified for free meals. For additional information, see U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Final Rule on Direct Certification of Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals and Free Milk in Schools," Federal Register, Vol. 64, No. 248, p. 72466-72471, or at www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/Governance/Defaults.htm.*

[29] *Prototype forms are available from your NSLP state agency or from the Food Research & Action Center at 202-986-2200.*

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL CHILD CARE PROGRAM

In Kansas City, Missouri, community leaders began looking for ways to develop integrated funding streams to support out-of-school time programs throughout the school district. Funding for breakfasts through the SBP and for snacks through the NSLP provided a stable foundation of support, but obviously only met a small portion of the program's financial requirements. As the before- and after-school child care program serves primarily elementary school children, accessing child care subsidy dollars seemed to be a logical option for program developers. However, the challenge of individually qualifying each student in the program for a child care subsidy was daunting.

Community leaders began to examine eligibility requirements for school meals and for child care subsidies and found that in virtually every case, if a child qualified for free school meals, they would also qualify for a child care subsidy. Community leaders began discussions with state agency officials and the district food service director to streamline the application process for families eligible for both programs. While state officials were committed to the concept of streamlining the application process, they still needed to ensure that the application would enable them to meet federal guidelines. After many conversations, state agency representatives agreed to append a one-page waiver of confidentiality agreement to the NSLP application—an application that parents were both familiar with and comfortable completing. Parents complete the agreement, which includes an authorization for the release of their children's free and reduced-price meal status to determine if their child is eligible for a child care subsidy for the before- and after-school child care program. The application also includes a check box to receive information about the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Under this system, once a child is qualified for free lunch, they are automatically qualified for a child care subsidy (as long as their parents meet certain work requirements)—parents do not need to fill out an additional application. The school food authority forwards information on children's free and reduced-price meal eligibility to the Local Investment Commission (LINC), a citizen commission that works toward improving coordination of human services at the neighborhood level. LINC then cross-references before- and after-school child care program attendance data with free meal eligibility information and creates an invoice for subsidy payments for all eligible children who attended before- and after-school programs. Creating an adequate management information system for program directors to track and report attendance data in a consistent and reliable manner was a necessary step in setting up this system.

In this, its first year of operation, the before- and after-school child care program operates in 44 out of the 53 elementary schools in the district and provides before- and after-school care during the school year. The program serves between 6,000 and 6,500 children, primarily between the ages of five and nine, although a small number of schools also serve three- and four-year-olds in a preschool program and/or children up to the age of 13 in K-8 schools. To finance the program, LINC draws down $4 million in child care subsidies, which are funded at the state level with TANF dollars. In addition to federal food funds and child care subsidies, the before- and after-school child care program also receives $1 million in Title I funding, contributions from the philanthropic community and local corporations, and parent fees (no fees for children eligible for free lunch are charged; fees for children eligible for reduced-price meals are $5 per week; fees for children not eligible for free or reduced-price meals are $15 per week).

Community leaders are currently exploring options to expand the program into the summer and are seeking additional funds from local government agencies. For more information, contact Gayle A. Hobbs, Executive Director, LINC, at 816-889-5050.

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Considerations:

- Coordinating application processes can enable schools and program developers to increase the number of children and families they serve by identifying eligible children who are currently not receiving benefits.
- Take a look at various health and human service program eligibility requirements to see what makes sense in your community. The more closely aligned that eligibility levels are, the easier coordinating administrative processes will likely be.
- Aligning eligibility requirements requires coordination between health and human service officials, school food service administrators, and out-of-school program directors. States and communities with centralized data collection and reporting systems can implement a system of unified eligibility requirements more easily. Unifying eligibility requirements in states and communities with separate oversight and administrative systems for schools and health and human service programs can be difficult and costly.
- Strong relationships with state and local officials are key to coordinating application processes and eligibility requirements. Streamlining and coordinating health and human service programs that are traditionally administered by separate agencies, while at the same time preserving needed accountability standards, is a difficult process. The commitment of state leaders to streamlining separate and distinct systems is essential.

Conclusion

Ensuring adequate nutrition is vital to the success of out-of-school time and community school programs serving children and youth. As entitlement programs, federal food and nutrition funds can provide a source of stable and reliable funding for out-of-school time and community school programs. Maximizing federal food and nutrition funds, in conjunction with other efforts to leverage funds from both public and private sources, remains an important financing strategy for sustaining out-of-school time and community school programs.

Resources on Using Federal Food and Nutrition Funds

50 Ways to Run the Summer Food Program on a Low Budget: A Guide for a Cost-Effective SFSP. Center on Hunger and Poverty, Tufts University (1997).

Breakfast: Don't Start School Without It! A School Breakfast Campaign Kit. Food Research & Action Center (1991)

Building Blocks Newsletter. Food Research & Action Center (continuing).

The Child and Adult Care Food Program Guide for After-School Programs in New York City. Community Food Resource Center, Inc. (1999).

Community Nutrition Action Kit. Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project: A Survey of Childhood Hunger in the United States. Food Research & Action Center (1995).

Evaluation of a Universally-Free School Breakfast Program Demonstration Project: Central Falls, Rhode Island. Center on Hunger and Poverty, Tufts University (1996).

Fuel for Excellence: FRAC's Guide to School Breakfast Expansion. Food Research & Action Center (1991).

A Guide To Starting The Summer Food Service Program. Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (1999).

A Guide to Universal Free School Breakfast Programs. Center on Hunger and Poverty, Tufts University (1999).

Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation: A Status Report on the Summer Food Service Program for Children. Food Research & Action Center (1999).

The Relationship Between Nutrition and Learning. Food Research & Action Center (1989).

Running the Summer Food Program in Rural Areas: Major Issues and Model Programs. Center on Hunger and Poverty, Tufts University (1997).

School Breakfast Score Card. Food Research & Action Center (1998).

School Foodservice and Nutrition. American School Food Service Association (continuing).

School's Out, Let's Eat: FRAC's Guide to Using the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to Expand Afterschool Opportunities for Children. Food Research & Action Center (1997).

Speaking Points on Child Nutrition and Cognitive Development. Center on Hunger and Poverty, Tufts University (1996).

State of the States: A Profile of Food and Nutrition Programs Across the Nation. Food Research & Action Center (1998).

Statement on the Link Between Nutrition and Cognitive Development in Children. Center on Hunger and Poverty, Tufts University (1998).

Contact Information for Resources

American School Food Service Association
703-739-3900
www.asfsa.org

Center on Hunger and Poverty,
Tufts University
617-627-3956
www.tufts.edu/nutrition/centeronhunger

Community Food Resource Center, Inc.
212-894-8094

Food and Nutrition Service,
U.S. Department of Agriculture
703-305-2286
www.fns.usda.gov/cnd

Food Research & Action Center
202-986-2200
www.frac.org

Welfare Information Network
202-528-5790
www.welfareinfo.org

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VISIT US ON THE WEB

For more information on financing out-of-school time and community school programs, vist the out-of-school time page on The Finance Project's web site at: http://www.financeproject.org/osthome.htm

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The Finance Project

The Finance Project is a non-profit policy research, technical assistance and information organization that was created to help improve outcomes for children, families, and communities nationwide. Its mission is to support decision making that produces and sustains good results for children, families, and communities by developing and disseminating information, knowledge, tools, and technical assistance for improved policies, programs, and financing strategies. Since its inception in 1994, The Finance Project has become an unparalleled resource on issues and strategies related to the financing of education and other supports and services for children, families, and community development.

The Out-of-School Time Technical Assistance Project

This tool is part of a series of technical assistance resources on financing and sustaining out-of-school time and community school initiatives developed by The Finance Project with support from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds. These tools and resources are intended to assist policy makers, program developers and community leaders in developing financing and sustainability strategies to support effective out-of-school time and community school initiatives.

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